

BOOK REVIEW

COLEMAN, Simon, HACKETT, Rosalind I. J. (eds), *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism*. New York: New York University Press. 2015. 268pp. ISBN 9780814772607. \$27.

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Following the diagnosis made by the editors of *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism*, the anthropology of Christianity has been flourishing as a subdiscipline of anthropology for several decades, becoming now recognized analytical field. Consequently, the current corpus of anthropological literature on Pentecostal and evangelical churches is abundant and multi-layered, and the editors raise an important question concerning the present location and future development of this research area. As Joel Robbins claims in the afterword of the volume, the anthropology of Christianity has already come to its mature age and therefore it needs to be seen as an established science stepping beyond its “revolutionary” period, if we want to capture its evolution in Kuhn’s terms.

The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism is thus intended both as a neat résumé of the evolution of the discipline (Introduction), with some important insights for scholars and students entering the field, and a presentation of the current state of the art. For the latter purpose, Simone Coleman and Rosalind I. J. Hackett have gathered twelve, relatively short contributions. Considering that the volume aims to constitute summary of the discipline, it unites scholars that have been working in the field for several decades together with a new generation of already renowned researchers. A strong side of this collection therefore is its high-quality, multi-layered ethnography based in geographically diverse settings, as dispersed as Brazil, Angola, Guatemala, South Korea, Singapore and Penang, Kyrgyzstan, Polynesia, Tanzania, the USA and several key European cities. This multilocality gives an excellent insight into local peculiarities of globalization and the transnational character of the contemporary evangelical and Pentecostal movement, however the representativeness of this selection might be interrogated, as it spots rather random places. This raises of course the more general question on the capacity of collections to serve as the epitome and summary of any discipline, but it may safely be assumed that the editors see the spatial and also thematic disparity of the volume as the means of capturing, highlighting and pushing forward relevant research areas that have surged over the years within the anthropology of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism.

Following this principle, the contributions are gathered in four thematic groups. The opening section entitled “Moralizing the World” focuses on the moral construction of social lives and religiously moulded livelihoods. Omri Elisha examines the case of men associations existing within evangelical megachurches in Tennessee. The spiritual and moral life, as Elisha depicts in his ethnography, is seen as a part of lived religion, thus it places religious attitudes in the complexity of social practices. This approach corresponds with Kristine Krause’s article, where she shows moral geographies as networks woven by engaging multiple layers of social life of Ghanaian church members in Europe. She analyses the moral as an interplay of individual experience, spatialities and religious practices. Jean DeBernardi in turn gives a very interesting insight into the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century emplacement of evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity in Singapore and Penang. She directs special attention to women as religious subjects experiencing significant social changes as a result of stepping out of an established, local social order.

The second section concerns “Language and Embodiment”. Approaching the Vineyard evangelical and Pentecostal movement, Jon Bialecki focuses on affects as crucial factors of identity construction and transmission. He suggests that affects might be seen as both important factors of future dissemination of Charismatic movements and key terms for understanding their modes of spirituality. Kelly H. Chong in her contribution dwells in turn on moulding the feminine subject by a certain evangelical habitus. She shows this process as an oscillation within the counter structure given by local social and cultural features. Analysing the intersection of religious lives and modes of perception in Catholic Charismatic communities, Thomas J. Csordas draws attention to linkages between practicing the space by religious subjects and imaginative geographies of the spiritual universe.

The third section looks at “Transmission and Mediation”, offering a fascinating approach to material culture and modes of transmission of religious cultures and spiritualities. Martin Lindhardt focuses on the intersection between spiritual warfare, money and material goods in the context of Tanzania. Martijn Oosterbaan, commenting on electronic media and transmission of charisma in Rio de Janeiro’s evangelical shows, and Mathijs Pelkmans considering miracles as forms of important religious legitimization in Pentecostal churches in Kyrgyzstan, both give a great insight into the mediated structuring of the Pentecostal and evangelical spirituality and institutions.

The closing section, entitled “The State and Beyond: New Relations, New Tensions”, focuses on crosscutting of the religious and socio-political realm. Ruy Llera Blanes investigates the links between the Angolan state politics in terms of profiling religious institutions and moulding religious realms in Angola. His article dialogues with Kevin Lewis O’Neill’s contribution into Guatemala’s Pentecostals, whose religious practices might be seen as grassroots of political activism. Yannick Fer’s article links with these contributions by examining an affirmative stance taken towards local cultures by new Charismatic movements in Polynesia that have influenced morality and identity formation, especially within the Pacific Christian youth.

As is apparent from this content summary, the collection certainly plots the current range of research topics and analytical approaches present in the discipline, and which the editors consider as the contours for considering the anthropology of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism as an established, mature field. All the contributions are, moreover, engaged in pushing forward analytically by employing a broad social perspective, engaging with other disciplines, and dwelling on general anthropological topics. However, the promise of novelty that the editors formulate needs to be interrogated, as the main topics and approaches framing each thematic section are not particularly novel in the anthropological research of evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity. Therefore the programmatic claim of the book to chart future trajectories for the disciplines evolution may seem overly ambitious. What emerges from the book as a whole is that two facets will remain important in the anthropology of Christianity. First, a close, microscopic reading of the social world as shaped by Christian structuring and, second, the search for links between religious practices, imaginations and spiritualities, both within global Christianity and with the secular world. It is a strength of the book that it unites both perspectives, while hopefully opening up a fruitful discussion about how the established topics, methods, and theories in the anthropology of Christianity might be taken forward.